

## **Announcement for FY04 Pilots OSWER Innovation Pilots**

### **OVERVIEW INFORMATION**

***Federal Agency:*** The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response (OSWER)

***Funding Opportunity Title:*** The Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response Innovation Pilots.

***Announcement Type:*** New Solicitation for Fiscal Year 2004

**Funding Opportunity Number:** OSWER 0401

***Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number(s):***

If applying for a grant or cooperative agreement, the following Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance numbers may apply:

- 66.804 - State and Tribal Underground Storage Tanks
- 66.808 - Solid Waste Management Assistance
- 66.813 - Alternative or Innovative Treatment Technology Research, Demonstration Training, and Hazardous Substance Research Grants
- 66.810 - CEPP Technical Assistance Grants Program
- 66.611 - Environmental Policy and Innovation Grants

***Dates:*** The IWG plans to have two review rounds in Fiscal Year 2004 - one in the Winter and one in the Spring. Proposals for the Fall are due December 5, 2003 and proposals for the Spring are due April 16, 2004. We expect to distribute the funds equally in each round.

The Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response (OSWER) set aside a limited amount of funding for regional and HQ program offices to develop new and creative approaches addressing OSWER's key priorities. Often times, however, good ideas are developed or enhanced through collaboration and partnership with co-regulators and external stakeholders. To encourage this collaboration while ensuring a fair and open process to solicit projects, a competition has been established to determine which, if any, proposals not submitted by an EPA employee, the EPA regions or HQ offices will partner with an eligible entity.

EPA anticipates at least \$500,000 will be available to fund creative proposals testing innovative approaches to waste minimization, energy recovery, recycling, land revitalization, and homeland security related to chemical emergency, preparedness, and response that may be replicated across various sectors, industries, communities, and regions. We anticipate selecting between 12 - 20 proposals. Proposals can be submitted by EPA employees in OSWER headquarters or regional offices; public authorities (Federal, State, interstate, intrastate, and local); public agencies and institutions; nonprofit private organizations, agencies, and institutions; academia; and federally

recognized Tribes. All funds allocated under this program can be placed into Interagency Agreements (IAGs), contracts, cooperative agreements, or grants, depending upon the principal purpose of the transaction. A template has been developed to aid in the development of proposals.

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### **I. Funding Opportunity Description**

To encourage innovative thinking and “can do” approaches about environmental challenges throughout the Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response (OSWER) programs, OSWER established the Innovations Work Group (IWG) and an Innovation Pilot Initiative. The IWG’s primary goals are to pilot and test new ideas and integrate innovation into everyday worklife to make OSWER programs more efficient, effective, and user-friendly.

The Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response (OSWER) IWG anticipates providing at least \$500,000 to fund creative proposals testing innovative approaches to one or more of the following priority areas:

- environmental protection through community revitalization;
- energy recovery, recycling, waste minimization;
- retail initiative/building public support for environmental stewardship;
- homeland security related to chemical emergency prevention preparedness and response.

Often times, however, good ideas are developed or enhanced through collaboration and partnership with co-regulators and external stakeholders. To encourage this collaboration while ensuring a fair and open process to solicit projects, a competition has been established to determine which, if any, proposals not submitted by an EPA employee, the EPA regions or HQ offices will partner with eligible entities.

The pilots support EPA's overall goals and objectives through projects focusing on better waste management, preventing pollution, restoring contaminated sites, chemical preparedness and emergency response. To date, thirty-one innovation pilots have been selected. Examples of projects include: making plastics from plant materials, working with the private sector to solicit designs for reusable packaging for books and CDs purchased through the internet; exploring an innovative approach to processing food waste and its potential renewable energy applications; and testing a market-based approach for reducing chemical use and waste at universities.

Proposals may be submitted by EPA employees in OSWER headquarters or regional offices; public authorities (Federal, State, interstate, intrastate, and local); public agencies and institutions; nonprofit private organizations, agencies, and institutions; academia; and federally recognized Tribes. Up to \$75,000 can be requested per pilot, however, we strongly suggest that you be as realistic as possible in your request. All funds allocated under this program can be placed into Interagency Agreements (IAGs), contracts, cooperative agreements, or grants, depending upon the principal purpose of the transaction. A template has been developed to aid in the development of proposals.

## **II. Award Information**

Oftentimes, good ideas, need more study or the infusion of a small amount of resources to fully evaluate them. Limited funding might be all that is needed to fully inform an innovative idea or test a new innovative approach. Final funding for FY04 has not been determined yet, however, the OSWER Innovations Workgroup (IWG) expects to have at least \$500,000 available in FY04

for funding pilot projects. The number of projects selected varies each year depending upon the funds requested for each selected pilot. In FY02 we funded 12 pilots and in FY03 we selected 19. In FY04 we expect to award between 12 to 20 pilots. We expect to distribute these funds equally in two rounds. Up to \$75,000 can be requested per pilot, however, we strongly suggest that you be as realistic as possible in your request. We have a preference to fund as many projects as possible; therefore, the likelihood of getting selected is greater if a smaller amount of funds is requested or if you can show that you are leveraging existing resources. The average funding per pilot is \$35,000. The anticipated period of performance for the pilots is one to two years.

Please note, in FY04, we will not be providing additional funds to projects selected in FY02 or FY03. We will re-evaluate this decision at the end of the Fiscal Year.

All funds allocated under this program can be placed into Interagency Agreements (IAGs), contracts, cooperative agreements, or grants, depending upon the principal purpose of the transaction. Contracts must be used to obtain services for EPA's direct use or benefit, and may be used to provide in-kind assistance to eligible non-Federal organizations. Grants and cooperative agreements may be used to provide financial support to non-Federal organizations to help them carry out their own projects addressing the four priority areas. Cooperative agreements are appropriate when EPA will be substantially involved in assisting the recipient carry out its project. The decision whether to award a grant or cooperative agreement will be made on a case-by-case basis depending upon the anticipated substantial involvement by EPA. EPA cannot direct contractors or assistance recipients to hire particular individuals or contract with particular firms. Any transactions involving the transfer of funds between EPA financial assistance recipients or contractors and private businesses and individual must comply with applicable regulations and policies.

### **III. Eligibility Information**

#### **Who is Eligible to Submit a Proposal?**

***If requesting funds*** - Proposals for funding under this program generally can be submitted by EPA employees in OSWER headquarters or regional offices; public authorities (Federal, State, interstate, intrastate, and local); public agencies and institutions; nonprofit private organizations, agencies, and institutions; academia; and federally recognized Tribes. Some of EPA's statutes may limit assistance to specific types of interested applicants. IWG pilot **funds** are not available for "for profit" companies or organizations or private individuals. (If you are applying for a grant or cooperative agreement, a description of how you are an eligible entity is required with your proposal. The proposal template used to submit your proposal includes a section for this description.)

***If not requesting funds*** - In addition to the organizations and institutions identified in the preceding paragraphs, private businesses and individuals, even though they are not eligible for funding, may submit proposals without a request for funds or work with eligible entities on funded projects once funding is awarded. In some cases, organizations may be interested in

utilizing EPA technical expertise, project evaluation support, outreach assistance, or other resources.

### **Are there Cost Sharing or Matching Requirements?**

The IWG anticipates the only cost share requirement for its pilots will be for projects awarded under CERCLA 311 (b)(3) for alternative or innovative treatment technology research and demonstration. CERCLA 311(b)(3) requires EPA “to the maximum extent possible” enter into an appropriate cost-sharing arrangement with recipients of grants and cooperative agreements. EPA may waive the 311(b)(3) cost-sharing requirement in appropriate cases. In-kind contributions can count toward meeting the cost share requirement. Applicants submitting proposals for innovative and alternative treatment technology must either propose a match of at least 5% or request a waiver.

### **What are the Threshold Criteria?**

To be eligible for funding, applicants must meet both of the following two threshold criteria. Threshold criteria are evaluated on a pass/fail basis. If a response to a threshold criterion fails, the proposal it will be disqualified from further consideration. EPA, however, may seek clarification from an applicant regarding its response to the threshold criteria.

1. Project addresses a critical challenge or unmet need related to one or more of the following priority areas:

- environmental protection through community revitalization;
- energy recovery, recycling, waste minimization;
- retail initiative/building public support for environmental stewardship;
- homeland security related to chemical emergency prevention preparedness and response.

*A proposal can cover more than one priority area. The applicant must identify the priority area(s) the project is addressing.*

2. If you are applying to partner with EPA as a grant or cooperative agreement recipient and requesting funding, you must be an eligible entity to receive a grant or cooperative agreement.

*If you are applying for a grant or cooperative agreement you must include with your proposal a description of how you are an eligible entity. Refer to the description of eligibility in this section.*

### **Other Eligibility Criteria**

In addition to the two Threshold Criteria identified in the preceding paragraph, an applicant is required to meet all the requirements of this announcement. We have attempted to summarize or provide a cross reference for all the requirements here, however, you should review the rest of the announcement carefully and contact an IWG member if you have any questions regarding eligibility.

The applicant must meet all format and content requirements contained in this announcement. The applicant must comply with the directions for submittal. Failure to meet these requirements

will result in your application being returned without review (see Section IV). Additionally, Section IV identifies any funding restrictions based on statutory or policy requirements.

Proposals can be submitted to only one IWG member.

We have a preference to fund as many projects as possible; therefore, the likelihood of getting selected is greater if a smaller amount of funds is requested or if you can show that you are leveraging existing resources.

If awarded, projects must ensure that no population is subjected to unjust or disproportionate environmental impacts - risk should not be shifted from one population to another.

#### **IV Application and Submission Information**

##### **How do I Obtain the Proposal Template needed to apply?**

A copy of the [IWG template](#) is found on this web site. If you do not have access to the Internet, you can request a hard copy of the template from any of the IWG members. (See List of IWG Members)

##### **What Should be in My Proposal? How do I Submit it? How Long Should it be?**

The IWG developed a template to be used for all pilot proposals. The sections found in italics are meant to be filled in. There is a **five** page limit for each completed proposal, including the budget and milestones. Proposals in excess of five pages will not be evaluated and will not be considered for funding. All IWG members in EPA regions and HQ offices are required to follow this restriction. We will not accept attachments, maps, or photos. Please submit your proposal **electronically** in WordPerfect or Word, 12 pitch, one inch margins to an IWG member, except for homeland security proposals. Proposals addressing homeland security related to chemical emergency prevention preparedness and response should be electronically submitted directly to the HQ IWG Homeland Security contact, Kim Jennings and not the regional or other HQ contacts. See [IWG members](#) for contact information, including their e-mail addresses. In the event of a system failure, please contact your IWG member. The IWG will accept hard copies postmarked by the due date or hand delivered proposals only in the rare event of a system failure, and after he or she receives notification prior to the submittal due date of system problems. If you do not have access to electronic mail please contact the IWG member.

**Documentation of Partner Participation (does not count against page limit)** *If the applicant is including cooperative partners as part of the pilot team*, a letter of support from the cooperative partner(s) is required. These letters must be on the partners' letterhead and must be signed by a responsible official of the partner organization stating their intention to work on and/or contribute funds to the project including an estimate of the funding and time commitment. These letters can be submitted separately from the proposal but must be submitted by the proposal due date. Please note, in some cases pilots will not have cooperative partners. In those cases, letters of support from partners are not required.

Proposals can be submitted to only one IWG member.

### **When are Proposals Due?**

The IWG anticipates having two review rounds in Fiscal Year 2004 - one in the Winter and one in the Spring. Proposals for the Fall are due December 5, 2003 and proposals for the Spring are due April 16, 2004. All proposals must be received electronically by 6:00 p.m. local time on the due date. Late proposals will not be reviewed. The IWG will use the computer generated time and date for documenting receipt time and date. We expect final decisions to be made within three months of the proposal due date. We expect to award the funds equally in each round.

### **Intergovernmental Review**

If you receive funds via a Cooperative Agreement or Grant, Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs applies.

### **Funding Restriction**

All projects must be directly related to solid waste, hazardous substances in the environment, or chemical emergency preparedness, prevention, and response, and at least one of the four OSWER priority areas identified on page three. EPA funds may only be used for the purposes set forth in the award, and must be consistent with the statutory authority for the award. OSWER anticipates using the Solid Waste Disposal Act, section 8001, as amended; the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976, as amended; the Comprehensive Environmental Response and Liability Act, Sections 104 and 311; the Clean Air Act, Sections 112 and 103; the Clean Water Act, Section 104 as amended; and the Toxic Substances Control Act, Sections 10 and 28 for funding grants or cooperative agreements. Once proposals are reviewed and final recommendations are prepared, the IWG confirms the authority to be used to fund the projects and may make modifications to the project to fall within the purview of the authority of the statute.

Most of the statutes authorize awards for the following activities: research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys, education materials and programs, and studies. The statutory term "demonstration" can encompass the first instance of the application or an innovative application of a previously used method.

Assistance shall not include any element of construction. The term research may include the application of established practices when they contribute to learning about an environmental concept or problem. Funding awarded for research under CERCLA 311(c) does not include research within the purview of EPA's Office of Research and Development.

Grant funds may not be used for matching funds for other Federal grants or lobbying.

All costs identified in the budget must conform to applicable Federal Cost Principles contained in OMB circular A-87, A-122, and A-21. Ineligible costs will be reduced from final grant award.

## V. Application Review Information

### What are the proposal evaluation criteria?

The IWG using the following seven criteria:

Criterion 1 - Addresses a critical challenge or unmet need related to one or more of the four priority areas

Criterion 2 - Is an eligible entity, if applying for a cooperative agreement or grant

Criterion 3 - Fosters either innovative approaches toward environmental challenges or a more innovative culture or organizational system within the targeted organization.

Criterion 4 - Provides a process to measure and evaluate the impact of the pilot and desired outcome

Criterion 5 - Builds and strengthens partnerships with state, tribal and local governments or interested public federal programs/initiatives; and/or other external stakeholders.

Criterion 6 - Potential for pilot results to be applied across geographic regions or programs

Criterion 7 - Likelihood of producing preliminary short term results within six months and longer term results and or/measurable progress within one year of initiation of the project.

The first two criteria are considered “Threshold Criteria” and were discussed in Section III. Proposals that pass the Threshold Criteria will be evaluated based upon responses to criteria three through seven. These are evaluation criteria and will be evaluated on a point system. The evaluation criteria and associated weights are as follows:

Criterion 3 - Fosters either innovative approaches toward environmental challenges or a more innovative culture or organizational system within the targeted organization. (15 points) *All applicants must identify why this proposal is truly innovative or encourages an innovative culture. For the purposes of the IWG evaluation, we are considering proposals innovative if they fall within one of these categories:*

- 1) is a new idea*
- 2) expands an existing idea to another sector or geographic region*
- 3) promotes an innovative idea or “sells” the results*

Criterion 4 - Provides a process to measure and evaluate the impact of the pilot and desired outcome. (5 points) *Applicants must describe how evaluation and measurement of success will be accomplished. Describe any baseline measures of success you have developed or plan to develop. List the measurements you will use to determine whether the project is a success. The measures of success need to be specific and linked to the process and overall objectives for your pilot. Proposals should be able to demonstrate how performance related measures will be used in measuring and evaluating environmental and human health protection and outcome, if appropriate.*

Criterion 5 - Builds or strengthens partnerships with state, tribal and local governments; other federal programs/initiatives; and/or other external stakeholders. (5 points) *Applicants must identify how this project will build and strengthen partnerships with stakeholders, states, or tribes. If partnering, a letter of support from those entities is recommended. The applicant*



*must describe any activities conducted or planned to be conducted in order to build or strengthen stakeholder involvement and describe the role and responsibilities of your cooperative partners, if any.*

Criterion 6 - Potential for pilot results to be applied across geographic regions or programs. (10 points) *We are looking for projects whose findings/results can be incorporated into EPA programs or expanded to other areas. Describe the potential transferability of the innovation.*

Criterion 7 - Likelihood of producing preliminary short term results within six months and longer term results and or/measurable progress within one year of initiation of the project. (5 points) *We will be accepting proposals whose project period is longer than six months but we are looking for projects that will show some results in the short term (six months.)*

### **How are proposals reviewed and selected?**

Proposals must be submitted directly to an **IWG member** by the scheduled due date. Each region or HQ OSWER program office reviews and evaluates the proposals against the threshold and evaluation criteria noted in the preceding paragraph and in Section III. Based on these criteria, IWG members determine which proposals they will forward to the full IWG for review. Reviewers will evaluate responses to the threshold criteria on a pass/fail basis and will evaluate responses to evaluation criteria using a point system. If a proposal fails one threshold criterion it will not receive any further consideration. Each region and program office may only forward a pre-determined number to the IWG. The number may vary each round. By forwarding a proposal, the regions and program offices are committing to following through and developing the pilot if it is selected; therefore, at this point an EPA sponsor is assigned by the region or program office to proposals submitted by an external stakeholder or co-regulator. The EPA sponsor is responsible for all aspects of the pilot, including the allocation of pilot funds and may act as the project officer.

The IWG will review and evaluate the proposals in national panels against the established five criteria identified in the template. Final funding decisions will be made by OSWER senior management, based upon the IWG's recommendations. EPA decisions may take into account other statutory and policy considerations, such as geographic distribution; whether the applicant is a federally recognized Tribe; distribution among the priority areas and program offices; and consideration of environmental justice issues.

### **When will funding decisions be made?**

We expect final decisions to be made within three months of the proposal due date. The Agency, however, reserves the right to reject all proposals.

## **VI. Award Administration Information**

### **Award Notices**

Final funding selection will be made by OSWER Assistant Administrator or his/her designee based upon the recommendations of the OSWER Innovations Workgroup. Successful applicants will receive a letter via electronic mail or fax stating that their proposal has been selected and

will be asked to submit a cooperative agreement/grant or other funding package to the appropriate EPA regional or OSWER HQ program office. Applicants receiving a cooperative agreement or grant will be required to submit a formal request for funding assistance (i.e., federal form SF 424 and associated documentation). Once the package is approved, a notice of award signed by the approving official will be sent to the applicant through postal mail. The award letter is the authorization to begin performance. EPA will work closely with the applicant to process and finalize the package. Applicants who submitted proposals for the second round should be aware that a very quick turnaround is required if they are asked to submit a formal request for funding assistance (i.e., within four weeks or less after contacted by EPA.) Unsuccessful applicants will also receive a letter via electronic mail or fax informing them of the selection results.

We expect to make final selection within three months of the proposal due dates. We expect to have all awards made by September 30, 2004.

### **Administrative and National Policy Requirements**

Cooperative Agreements or Grants approved will include terms and conditions. These terms and conditions will be binding on the recipient and cover such areas as complying with all applicable federal regulations and reporting requirements. (See the following Reporting section.)

### **Reporting**

If selected, there are three required elements that must be completed regardless of whether funds are received: quarterly report with performance measures and budget; a brief lessons learned report/final report; and a scoping paper for an in-depth evaluation. (EPA staff are available as an advisory resource, as needed, to help with performance measures development and other evaluative planning.) The quarterly reports do not have to be lengthy but must include the following information: current status of the project; results achieved thus far, including the evaluation measures; budget expenditures and current status of funds; and issues impeding further progress. We will work with the selected pilots to develop performance measures. Performance measures will be reviewed and incorporated into the quarterly reports, any workplans, scopes of work etc. Electronic submission of quarterly reports is preferred and strongly recommended but not required.

### **VII. Agency Contacts**

Information on the initiative including information on pilots previously selected and [Frequently Asked Questions](#) can be found on the IWG web site. Additionally, you can contact an IWG member. See [IWG member list](#) for the names, phone and fax numbers, and e-mail addresses of the IWG members.

Pre-application assistance: IWG members can help you understand the eligibility requirements. **Such assistance is available to all applicants upon request.** [Frequently Asked Questions](#) will be posted on this web site.

### **VIII. Other Information**

Proposals are subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). This means that anyone can request, and receive copies of them. Applicants should clearly mark information they consider confidential. EPA will make final confidentiality decisions in accordance with Agency regulations in 40 CFR Part 2, Subpart B.

EPA reserves the right to reject any or all proposals or application and make no awards.

The dispute resolution process will be followed in accordance with 40 CFR 30.63 and Part 31, Subpart F.